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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 8, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER  
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION

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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Parliament to Hold Extraordinary Session for Troop Deployment - *Hurriyet*  
Great Dangers in Iraq for Turkish Troops - *Turkiye*  
Psychological Operation - *Milliyet*  
PM Erdogan: "We Might Send Troops to Iraq" - *Sabah*  
444 Militants Applied to Benefit under Repentance Law - *Hurriyet*

OPINION MAKERS

Kurdish Obstacle for Turkish Troops - *Cumhuriyet*  
Iraq Briefing for President Sezer - *Radikal*  
PM Erdogan: "Turkey's Decision for Troop Deployment in Iraq Will Not Come as a Surprise" - *Zaman*  
Felluce Trap for Turkish Troops - *Yeni Safak*  
FM Gul: "We Should Consider Sending Troops Even Without UN or NATO Decision" - *Yeni Safak*  
Returning Home Speeds Up - *Radikal*  
444 Applications for Repentance Law - *Cumhuriyet*

BRIEFING

Troop Deployment in Iraq: "Milliyet" reports that Turkey will send a delegation to Iraq next week to check the feelings of the Iraqi people against Turkish troops. The delegation will consist of Turkish military and civilian officials. To understand Iraqi's feelings against Turkish troops, the delegation will meet with the local leaders in Baghdat, Felluce and Tikrit. "Hurriyet" reports that PM Erdogan and FM Gul met with President Sezer yesterday to convince him to send troops to Iraq without waiting for a UN or NATO decision. PM and FM announced at their party meeting yesterday that, in order to pass the motion for troop deployment, they might call Parliament for an extraordinary session at the end of August or beginning of September. "Hurriyet" also covered Secretary of State Colin Powell's remarks about Turkish troop deployment. Speaking at the Foreign Press Center, Powell was quoted as saying that 'I informed Turkish Foreign Minister Gul two weeks ago that we want Turkish troops in Iraq. Mr. Gul told me that the issue will be evaluated by the Turkish government in detail. I presume, it will take time. We trust that Turkish troop existence in Iraq would be accepted by all the groups, including Kurdish groups. In order to end the PKK/KADEK threat, we are coordinating with our Turkish friends. And we are very pleased with our relations with Ankara on all these issues'.

Response to the Repentance Law: All papers report that the response to the law was immense on the first day of the application. "Hurriyet" reports that at a press conference yesterday, Interior Minister Aksu stated that so far 444 militants had applied for amnesty. 333 of those are inmates and 111 are militants. "Milliyet" notes that four PKK militants had already been set free following their application.

Turkey and TRNC Delay Customs Union Agreement: "Zaman" reports that Turkey and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus(TRNC) would postpone the signing of a customs union agreement scheduled for today.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

-- Iraq's Effect on Arab world  
-- US-Turkey Relations/Iraq

"Arab World's Stance"

Ahmet Tasgetiren commented in Islamist-intellectual Yeni Safak (8/8): "The Arab League's decision about not recognizing the Iraqi Governing Council was interpreted as a surprise development because the general expectation was to see a more moderate approach than this. However, members of the Arab League were pushed to make such a decision due to their public opinion pressure. . The fact of the matter is that the US is not a beloved figure in the region, and the occupation for whatever reason is not approved. Thus any American initiative, including the Iraqi Governing Council, is considered as illegitimate. . It looks as though it is best to suggest the US withdraw from Iraq at once. It will serve the interest of all parties in the region when and if authority is left to the Iraqis before any more chaos and more power vacuums. It will also serve the US interests in particular when and if Washington saves itself from neo-cons in policy making."

"Turkish PM Dreams of Hosting Bush in Ankara"

Zeynep Gurcanli wrote in the tabloid Star (8/8): "The decision process on whether or not to send Turkish troops to Iraq will be a tough one. . Yet it seems the AKP government expects a political gain by taking a risk of sending Turkish soldiers to an unstable area. Turkish government officials are trying to eliminate the last bits of worry about the policy and intention of the AKP within the eyes of Washington. Ankara is aware of the fact that working together with the US on Iraq is the best possible way to achieve this goal. And there is more to that. Turkey will host the NATO summit next year. President Bush will be in Turkey to attend. The Erdogan government wants to realize an extended tour for President Bush with the hope that he will visit Ankara before or after the summit. The idea of Erdogan hosting President Bush is interpreted by the AKP as the final stage of AKP's legitimacy vis-a-vis the western world."

DEUTSCH